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John Hay

JIM BLUDSO

OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE,

AND

LITTLE BREECHES.

By JOHN HAY.



BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD & CO.

In Press.

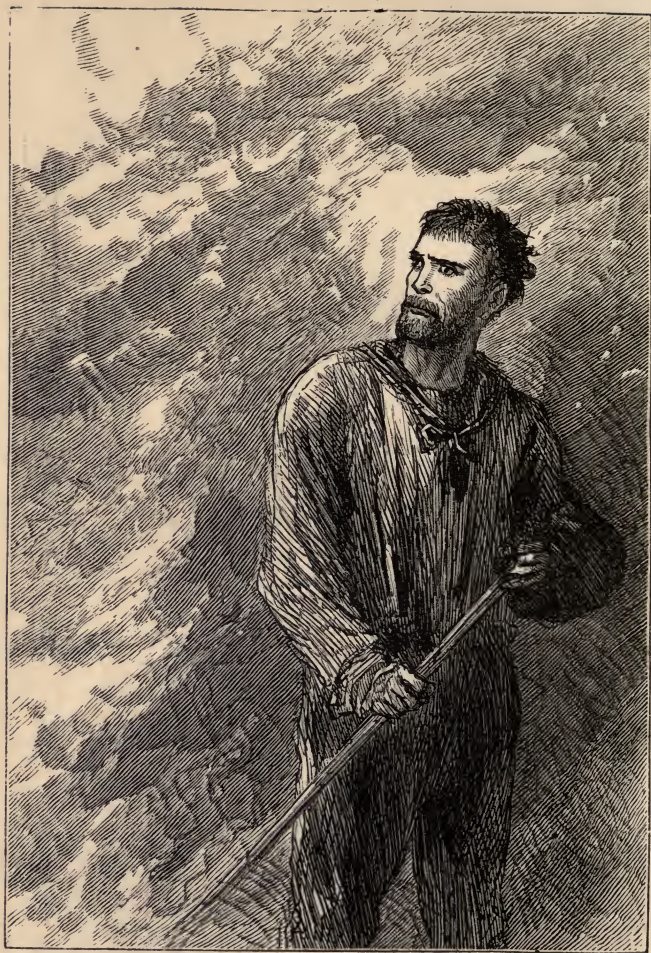


CASTILIAN DAYS.

By JOHN HAY.



JAMES R. OSGOOD & Co., PUBLISHERS.



I'LL HOLD HER NOZZLE AGIN THE BANK.

JIM BLUDSO
OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE,
AND
LITTLE BREECHES.

By JOHN HAY.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY S. EYTINGE, JR.



BOSTON :
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
LATE TICKNOR & FIELDS, AND FIELDS, OSGOOD, & Co.

1871.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

THE illustrations which accompany this edition of these popular ballads have been made under the author's eye, and have received his approval.

JIM BLUDSO,
OF THE PRAIRIE BELLE.

WALL, no! I can't tell whar he lives,
Becase he don't live, you see ;
Leastways, he 's got out of the habit
Of livin' like you and me.
Whar have you been for the last three year
That you have n't heard folks tell
How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks
The night of the Prairie Belle?



I CAN'T TELL WHAR HE LIVES.

Jim Bludso.

He were n't no saint, — them engineers
Is all pretty much alike, —
One wife in Natchez-under-the-Hill
And another one here, in Pike;
A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
And an awkward hand in a row, —
But he never flunked, and he never lied, —
I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had, —
To treat his engine well;
Never be passed on the river;
To mind the pilot's bell;
And if ever the Prairie Belle took fire, —
A thousand times he swore
He 'd hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last soul got ashore.



HE WERE N'T NO SAINT.

Jim Bludso.

All boats has their day on the Mississip,
And her day come at last,—
The Movastar was a better boat,
But the Belle she *would n't* be passed,
And so she come tearin' along that night—
The oldest craft on the line—
With a nigger squat on her safety-valve,
And her furnace crammed, rosin and pine.

The fire bust out as she clared the bar,
And burnt a hole in the night,
And quick as a flash she turned, and made
For that willer-bank on the right.
There was runnin' and cursin', but Jim yelled out,
Over all the infernal roar,
"I'll hold her nozzle agin the bank
Till the last galoot's ashore."



A NIGGER SQUAT ON HER SAFETY-VALVE.

Jim Bludso.

Through the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat

Jim Bludso's voice was heard,

And they all had trust in his cussedness,

And knowed he would keep his word.

And, sure's you 're born, they all got off

Afore the smokestacks fell, —

And Bludso's ghost went up alone

In the smoke of the Prairie Belle.

He were n't no saint, — but at jedgment

I 'd run my chance with Jim,

'Longside of some pious gentlemen

That would n't shook hands with him.

He seen his duty, a dead-sure thing, —

And went for it thar and then,

And Christ ain't a going to be too hard

On a man that died for men.



I NEVER AIN'T HAD NO SHOW.

LITTLE BREECHES.

I DON'T go much on religion,
I never ain't had no show ;
But I 've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
On the handful o' things I know.
I don't pan out on the prophets
And free-will, and that sort of thing, —
But I b'lieve in God and the angels,
Ever sence one night last spring.

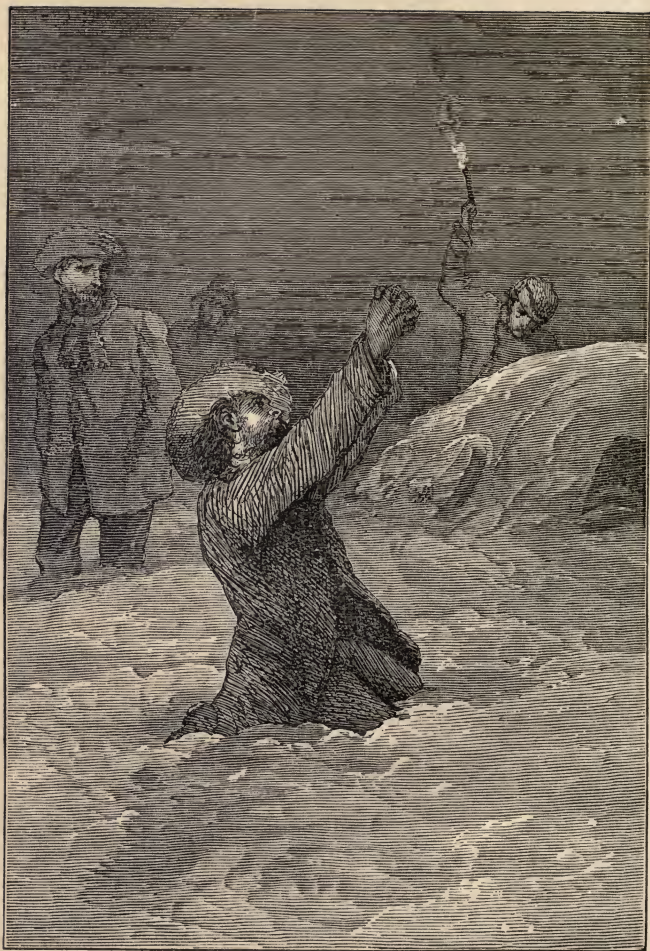


I HEARD ONE LITTLE SQUALL.

Little Breeches.

I come into town with some turnips,
And my little Gabe come along, —
No four-year-old in the county
Could beat him for pretty and strong,
Peart and chipper and sassy,
Always ready to swear and fight, —
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker
Jest to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket
As I passed by Taggart's store;
I went in for a jug of molasses
And left the team at the door.
They scared at something and started, —
I heard one little squall,
And hell-to-split over the prairie
Went team, Little Breeches and all.



I JEST FLOPPED DOWN ON MY MARROW-BONES.

Little Breeches.

Hell-to-split over the prairie!

I was almost froze with skeer;

But we roused up some torches,

And sarched for 'em far and near,

At last we struck hosses and wagon,

Snowed under a soft white mound,

Upsot, dead beat, — but of little Gabe

No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me,

Of my fellow-critter's aid, —

I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,

Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

By this, the torches was played out,

And me and Isrul Parr

Went off for some wood to a sheepfold

That he said was somewhar thar.



AND THAR SOT LITTLE BREECHES AND CHIRPED.

Little Breeches.

We found it at last, and a little shed
Where they shut up the lambs at night.
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,
So warm and sleepy and white;
And THAR sot Little Breeches and chirped,
As peart as ever you see,
“I want a chaw of terbacker,
And that ’s what ’s the matter of me.”

How did he git thar? Angels.
He could never have walked in that storm.
They jest scooped down and toted him
To whar it was safe and warm.
And I think that saving a little child,
And bringing him to his own,
Is a derned sight better business
Than loafing around The Throne.

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